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### ***A BUSY MAN'S AMATEUR MICROSCOPIC LABORATORY.***

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MARTIN S. WIARD, New Britain, Conn.

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The professional microscopist will, of course, have at least a room devoted to laboratory purposes, with tables, cabinets and various receptacles to keep the utensils and material needed in his work safe from dust and injury, but so they will be conveniently at hand whenever wanted. The amateur, however, who as a rule is limited in time for microscopic work to the moments he can snatch from a life almost wholly occupied with the regular duties of his business or profession, is not so favorably situated. Rarely, if ever, can he devote a room exclusively to the purpose, or even a table, and have them at all times ready. Far more frequently he has to keep his outfit, whether it be large or small, scattered about in drawers or boxes, and spend so much time in getting ready for even a simple operation, that many an interesting object is lost because of the inconvenience at the time of putting it in the conditions necessary for its preservation.

Having been the victim of many such disappointing experiences, one amateur has been led to devise an arrangement whereby he is able to secure many of the conveniences that are so desirable, and has derived so much satisfaction from its use, that he ventures to hope a description may prove not wholly without interest in the way of suggestion to some who may have been annoyed as he was.

While the precise dimensions and detail of arrangement is of no special importance, and would naturally be varied to suit the requirements and taste of the one who was to use it, perhaps the description will be more clear and definite by giving pretty closely the sizes and arrangement of the various parts under consideration.

The first step in the solution of the problem was the purchase at a dry goods store of a cabinet such as the manufacturers furnish them for the display of thread. It was of black walnut, 28 inches

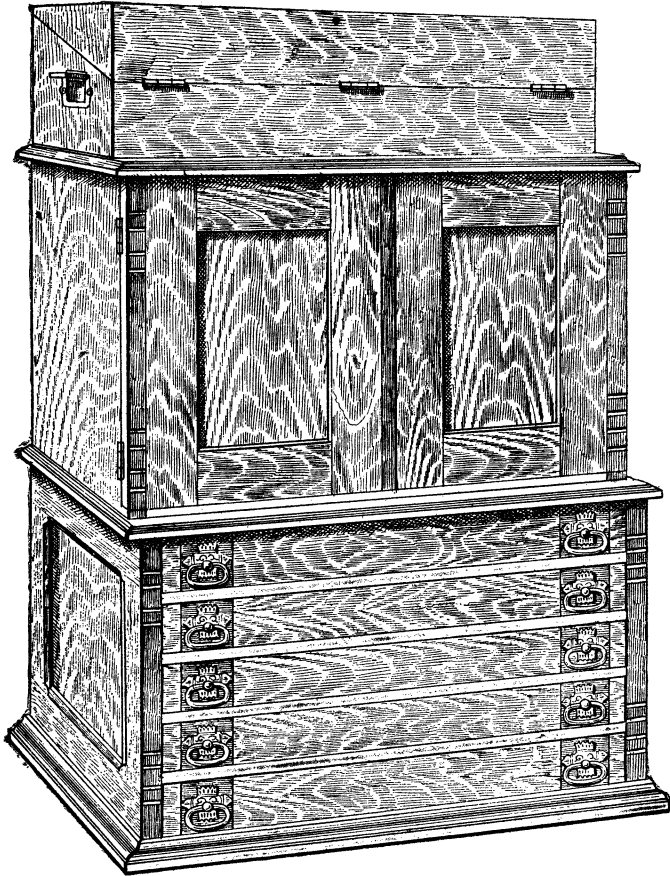
long by 18 inches wide, and 16 inches high, with five drawers about two inches deep. A little scraping removed the lettering, etc., and a coat of varnish, rubbed down, gave a good furniture finish. The partitions in the upper drawer, that were put in for thread, were all removed, and partitions substituted dividing the drawer into spaces for holding unmounted material that could be placed in envelopes, or other small packages in an alphabetical arrangement. In the other drawers the partitions were removed, or not, as was suitable for each case. A large number of short vials that would stand in the drawers were also procured, some with small mouths, for diatoms, others with a wide mouth for sections, etc. The remaining space in the drawers is used for holding slips and anything else that may be wanted.

A case was then made to stand upon the thread cabinet, the same length, but not quite so wide, leaving a narrow ledge in front of it. A partition divided the interior of this case in two parts, one  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, the other  $10\frac{1}{2}$  by  $15\frac{1}{8}$  inches high. Before the case was put together, grooves were sawed across the inner surface of each end and on both sides of the partition,  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch apart, in which strips of wood were glued, to form supports for drawers. Thirty drawers were made to go in the larger space,  $14\frac{1}{4} \times 14$  inches, and  $1\frac{5}{8}$  of an inch deep, and the same number for the smaller space, only  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide. The large drawers were divided by partitions into 16 spaces, each  $3\frac{1}{8}$  inches square, to hold three slides, and the smaller drawers into 12 similar spaces. Of course the fronts of the drawers are enough wider than the other parts, so when they are closed no space shows for the strips of wood upon which they are supported. Silicate labels and numbered knobs were put upon the fronts, and two doors to enclose the whole completed a slide cabinet holding 2,520 slides, any one of which, by a simple form of catalogue, can be referred to as readily as the page of a book.

NOTE.—The reference numbers were not made consecutive, but each drawer was numbered, each row of slides lettered, and each slide numbered in the row, *e. g.*, the fifth slide in the third row from the front of drawer No. 6 would be put down thus: 6 C 5.

Upon the slide cabinet is placed the working cabinet. That is a box the same length as the others, by  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches

deep. As it was made it was all fastened together securely, except the back edge of the board which formed the top of the box. That was left unfastened. The front side was then sawed longitudinally through the middle and each end diagonally from the cut in the

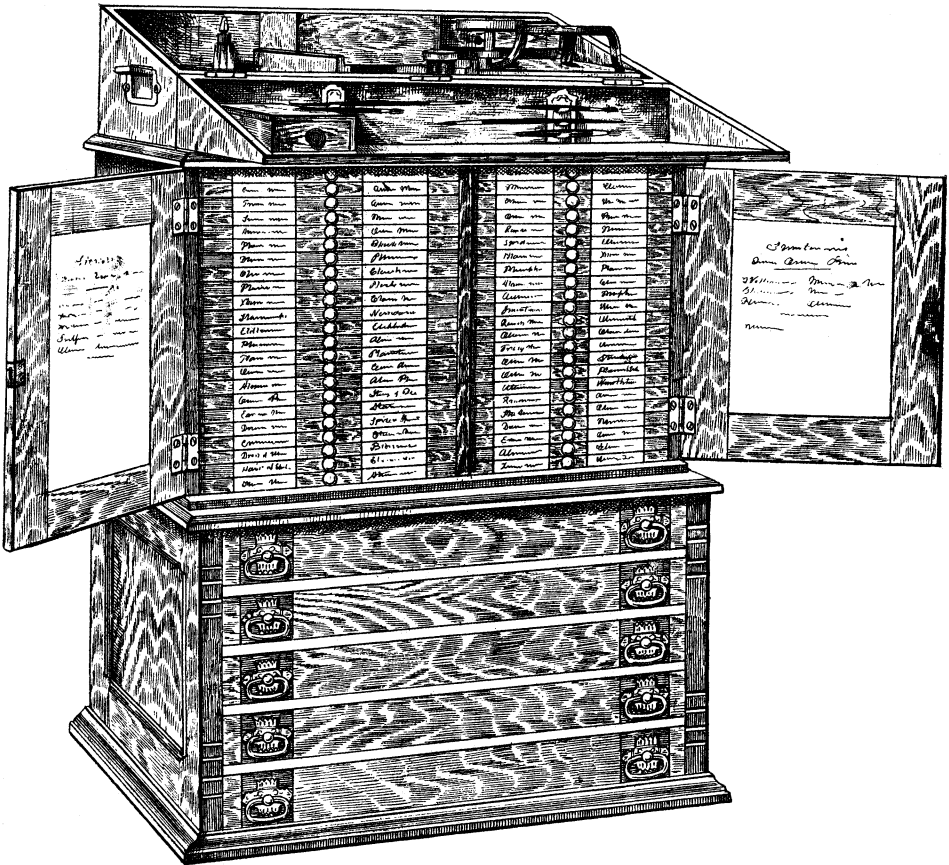


No. 1

middle of the front to the top of the back side, and the two parts into which the box was thus divided were put together with hinges, so that, when opened, the upper part would rest upon the slide cabinet in front of the lower part, and the inside of the top, or lid, projecting beyond the cabinets below, forms a table upon which

work could be done, while the apparatus, cements, media, etc., are contained in the box itself, all within easy reach of the operator, but out of sight and safe from dust or injury when the box is closed.

Thus it will be seen that quite a complete outfit is contained in



No. 2.

an article of furniture that occupies but little space and is unobjectionable in any room where it may be placed.

The accompanying illustrations will give a better idea of the arrangement than the description alone.

The first shows the cabinets closed (No. 1). The other shows them opened (No. 2), the upper one ready for work. It will be

noticed that the panels of the doors are white on the inside. That is because there is fastened upon them a list of the classification under which the objects are arranged in the drawers. At the left of the part that forms the work-table is a small drawer, in the front of which is a space for spring clips, to be at hand whenever wanted. The rest of the drawer is fitted with racks to hold a supply of slips ready for use, while the case which encloses it forms a convenient place to lay slides while in process of mounting or finishing. The box, or working cabinet, is divided by partitions, sliding tills, etc., into spaces suitable for the arrangement of the various bottles and utensils with reference to their safety and convenience. At the right the turn-table is standing upon a box that has a hinged lid. On the inside of the lid is a rack to hold needles, scissors, scalpels, etc.; when the lid is raised they are all in sight and conveniently at hand. In the box itself are short wide-mouthed vials for reagents, staining fluids, etc. At the left about one-third of the space in the cabinet is devoted to taller bottles for mounting media, etc. In the middle and at the right, back of the turn-table, are two sliding tills, so the space both within and underneath them can be used as may be found desirable. A lock fastens the lid when closed, and handles at the ends render it easy to carry the cabinet if it should be desirable to use it in any other place than upon the other cabinets.